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# Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region

## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2147 (2014), in which the Council requested me to report to it on the implementation by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region.[1] The report covers developments since the issuance of my report of 24 September 2014 (S/2014/697) and provides a description of peace and security initiatives with regard to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region before 15 February 2015. It provides an account of progress and challenges in the implementation of the Framework and recommendations to the Council on how best to advance the objectives of the Framework.

## II. Recent developments

### A. Political and security developments

2. The continuing activities by armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo notwithstanding, the Great Lakes region as a whole enjoyed relative stability during the reporting period. Two years after the signing of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, however, the agreement is facing significant challenges that hinder its full implementation. They are largely related to limited progress in neutralizing armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and to persistent mistrust between the leaders of the region. In particular, the lack of meaningful progress in the disarmament of the Forces démocratiques de

[1] In this context, the region is defined as covering the 13 signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors for the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations. For further information, see S/2013/119 and S/2013/131, annex.

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libération du Rwanda (FDLR) continued to dominate discussions at the regional and international levels during the reporting period.

3. On 15 September, the Government of South Africa, as Chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and its Troika, hosted a summit in Pretoria that brought together the SADC Troika, composed of Botswana, Malawi and Zimbabwe, and the Troika of the SADC Organ, comprising Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The participants endorsed the decisions of the second joint International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)-SADC ministerial meeting, held in July, namely, that the voluntary surrender and disarmament of FDLR must be completed within a six-month time frame. They called upon the United Nations, in cooperation with the African Union, to play a role in either repatriating those FDLR elements who had voluntarily surrendered or temporarily resettling them in third countries outside the region.

4. On 25 September, ICGLR and SADC jointly convened a meeting of stakeholders on the voluntary disarmament of FDLR, on the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The participants included ministers for foreign affairs and of defence and other senior officials from all the countries in the region, with the exception of Rwanda. My Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, and my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), Martin Kobler, also attended. During the meeting, a road map defining specific steps leading to the completion of the disarmament process was adopted. The steps included a joint ICGLR-SADC mission to the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo to engage with the FDLR leaders and urge the group to comply with the deadline of 2 January to disarm voluntarily or face military action, in accordance with previous decisions of the Heads of State of ICGLR and SADC and Security Council resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014).

5. The mission was conducted from 3 to 6 October and was jointly led by the Ambassador of South Africa to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, representing SADC, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ICGLR and the Director of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. Other participants included officials from Angola, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the Office of my Special Envoy and MONUSCO also participated. While a strong message was delivered to the acting leader of FDLR, Victor Byiringiro, he continued to insist on a political dialogue with Rwanda as a condition for further progress in the disarmament process, a position that the Government of Rwanda has consistently rejected.

6. On 20 October, at the third joint ICGLR-SADC ministerial meeting, held in Luanda, the participants discussed the midterm review of the voluntary disarmament of FDLR, in line with the decisions taken by the Heads of State and Government. They highlighted the lack of meaningful progress and urged FDLR to abide by the deadline of 2 January.

7. At the expiration of the deadline, only 339 of an estimated 1,500 FDLR combatants had surrendered in North Kivu and South Kivu, along with 1,119 dependants. Furthermore, only 17 of those who had surrendered were officers. With regard to equipment, FDLR handed over only 252 weapons, most of which were old and unserviceable. The individuals who surrendered are currently cantoned

at the Lieutenant General Jean-Lucien Bahuma transit camp in Kisangani, Orientale Province. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo — FARDC) are providing security for the camp, supplemented by MONUSCO.

8. During the six months granted to the movement to disarm and surrender, FDLR reportedly continued to commit human rights violations, recruit combatants and send mixed signals about its willingness to disarm fully. Victor Byiringiro released several communiqués in which he portrayed FDLR members as Rwandan refugees and demanded a political dialogue with the Government of Rwanda. He also wrote several letters to the United Nations, the African Union, ICGLR and SADC to reiterate the resolve of FDLR to disarm and its desire to engage in a political dialogue in Rwanda. He also raised alleged challenges relating to the disarmament process, including the limited capacity of the transit camps established to receive FDLR combatants.

9. In view of the lack of progress, the Security Council, the witnesses to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and the Governments of the region continued to exert diplomatic pressure on FDLR to lay down its weapons peacefully. On 2 January, the team of envoys and representatives for the Great Lakes region, comprising my Special Envoy, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, the Special Representative of the African Union, Boubacar Diarra, the Special Envoy of the United States of America, Russ Feingold, the Senior Coordinator of the European Union, Koen Vervaeke, and the Special Envoy of Belgium, Frank De Coninck, issued a joint statement in which they called for immediate military action against FDLR by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, supported by MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade. The same day, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo issued a statement in which it stressed that the only option remaining was to use force against FDLR, given that the group had failed to disarm voluntarily before the deadline. A few days later, the Governments of South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania unequivocally reiterated their readiness to support military operations against FDLR.

10. On 29 January, in Beni, North Kivu, during a joint press briefing attended by the Force Commander of MONUSCO, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, the Chief of the General Staff of FARDC, General Didier Etumba, announced the launch of an FARDC-led military operation (known as Operation Sukola II) to forcefully disarm FDLR. New commanders were appointed to lead both the operation and the thirty-fourth military region, in which the military action would be conducted. MONUSCO had, however, previously identified two newly appointed generals as allegedly bearing command responsibility for human rights violations committed by units under their command. Consequently, in line with the United Nations human rights due diligence policy, MONUSCO informed the Government that it would not be in a position to support the units involved in operations against FDLR as long as they were under the command of the two generals. On 15 February, at a meeting with the diplomatic corps in Kinshasa, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila Kabange, indicated that the decision to appoint or remove the generals was a sovereign prerogative and that his Government might forego the support of MONUSCO for the operations against FDLR. As at 15 February, Operation Sukola II had yet to produce meaningful results on the ground. While skirmishes between FARDC and

FDLR were reported in February, they have not yet translated into measurable progress in neutralizing the armed group.

11. With regard to the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, signed on 12 December 2013 by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23), the Government has continued to process applications submitted by ex-M23 combatants under the legislation adopted on 11 February 2014. On 3 September, the Government granted amnesty to 191 ex-M23 combatants, 162 of whom were cantoned in Uganda and 29 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. During a consultative meeting convened in Uganda on 1 October by the Executive Secretary of ICGLR, Alphonse Ntumba Luaba, ex-M23 leaders challenged the figures and contended that some of the persons granted amnesty were not from the former M23. Meanwhile, the Government of Uganda urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to repatriate all the ex-M23 elements present in Uganda by the end of December, failing which those individuals should apply for refugee status in Uganda.

12. To assess progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations and harmonize views on how to expedite the process, the Congolese National Oversight Mechanism and the ICGLR secretariat organized a meeting in Kinshasa on 7 November, attended by my Special Envoy and my Special Representative, the Special Envoy of the United States and representatives of other international envoys and key partners. The ex-M23 leaders declined to attend on security grounds, notwithstanding the assurances provided by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO, my Special Envoy and ICGLR. During the meeting, the Coordinator of the Mechanism announced that the number of ex-M23 members who had already been granted amnesty had increased to 559. Furthermore, during the most recent meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, held in Addis Ababa on 31 January, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Raymond Tshibanda N'tungamulongo, indicated that 702 ex-M23 members had been granted amnesty.

13. From 5 to 10 December, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sent a high-level mission to Kampala to discuss the next steps in the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants. Discussions between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Henry Okello Oryem, and the Deputy Minister for International and Regional Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Franck Mwendi Malila, focused on expediting the repatriation of an estimated 1,300 ex-M23 combatants in Uganda. The ex-M23 leaders did not participate in the bilateral discussions, but were approached separately by the ICGLR secretariat. Subsequently, technical teams from both sides met under the supervision of the chiefs of military intelligence of both countries and agreed on a plan of action, to be carried out from 7 to 25 December. Consequently, 120 ex-M23 elements were repatriated on 16 December and 62 on 30 December. The 182 individuals are currently quartered in the Kamina camp in Katanga Province, pending demobilization.

14. From 2 to 4 February, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo sent a high-level delegation to Kigali to discuss the repatriation of ex-M23 combatants who had fled to Rwanda and the handover of their military equipment to the Congolese authorities. The Congolese delegation was led by the Deputy Minister of Defence, René Nsibu. The Office of my Special Envoy, MONUSCO and ICGLR also participated in the consultations. The Congolese delegation met the

ex-M23 leaders in Rwanda and urged them to encourage all eligible ex-combatants to prepare for voluntary surrender and repatriation. The Deputy Minister gave assurances that all measures would be taken to provide security, food and accommodation to the ex-combatants once they returned to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

15. At the end of the visit, the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda issued a joint communiqué in which they reiterated their determination to implement their commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, expedite the repatriation of ex-M23 elements and hand over their military equipment to the Congolese authorities. The Rwandan authorities also shared with their Congolese counterparts a list of the military equipment confiscated from the ex-M23 elements. Meanwhile, the ex-M23 Coordinator, who had been deeply involved in the signing and implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, resigned on 10 January on the grounds that the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was not committed to implementing the Declarations. At the time of writing, ex-M23 leaders were continuing to express concern about the security of ex-M23 combatants held in cantonments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to question the willingness of the Government to fully implement other commitments contained in the Declarations. By contrast, the Government has consistently stated its commitment to fully implementing the Declarations.

16. On 11 February, the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism convened a second meeting on the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, which was held in Kinshasa. The participants decided, among other things, to accelerate the processing of applications for amnesty from ex-M23 elements. They also agreed to dispatch a delegation to Uganda to resolve any issue delaying the return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo of ex-M23 rebels remaining in that country. A similar demarche, to be undertaken at a later date, was also proposed in relation to Rwanda. In addition, the participants welcomed my Special Envoy's proposal to partner with MONUSCO to organize a national workshop on the implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

17. As indicated in my most recent report on MONUSCO (S/2015/172), FARDC and MONUSCO have continued their military operations against armed groups, notably the Allied Democratic Forces. That group continues to target innocent civilians in and around Beni, North Kivu. In other developments, on 30 December the Burundian army reportedly clashed with an unidentified armed group that had reportedly crossed from the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo into Cibitoke Province. The spokesperson for the Burundian army reported that 95 armed elements had been killed and 9 taken into custody. The Burundian authorities indicated that an investigation would be conducted. In another development, this time in Ruhuha, near the border between Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO and FARDC launched a joint operation (Kamilisha Usalama II) against a stronghold of the Forces nationales de libération, a Burundian rebel group, on 5 January. During the operation, 60 heavily armed combatants were forced to abandon the position.

## B. Humanitarian situation

18. The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region remained a cause for concern during the reporting period. The eastern provinces (North Kivu, South Kivu, Maniema and Orientale) continued to grapple with a complex emergency in which people, especially children, remained vulnerable to epidemics, attacks by armed groups, human rights abuses and malnutrition. The continuing conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, combined with other conflicts in the region, including in the Central African Republic, continued to cause significant population displacement throughout the region. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo alone, some 2.7 million people are internally displaced. The country continues to host some 122,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. The humanitarian action plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo for 2015 requires $692 million to meet the prioritized needs of 5.2 million people affected by conflict, malnutrition, epidemics and natural disasters.

19. Humanitarian agencies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have strengthened internal preparedness ahead of planned military operations against FDLR, including by reinforcing coordination with country offices in neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda to tackle their cross-border impact. The humanitarian country team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo recently updated its humanitarian contingency plan. Furthermore, the team has continued to advocate the protection of civilians before, during and after military operations, in addition to access for the delivery of essential lifesaving humanitarian assistance to those affected by armed conflict.

20. Recognizing the multifaceted and regional nature of issues relating to refugees and internally displaced persons in the Great Lakes region, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) appointed a regional coordinator for the Great Lakes refugee situation on 15 October. He will help to fine-tune the UNHCR strategy and develop durable solutions for Congolese and Rwandan refugees in the region, in close collaboration with key partners.

21. Continuing insecurity in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, coupled with unresolved issues relating to land and natural resources, has continued to prevent some 443,250 Congolese refugees living in neighbouring countries from returning home. In September, UNHCR issued a position paper relating to Congolese refugees, in which it noted that persons fleeing the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo were likely to be in need of international refugee protection. It urged States not to forcibly return persons from the Kivus, Katanga and parts of Orientale Province until the security and human rights situation in those areas had improved considerably.

22. UNHCR has also developed a comprehensive strategy to address the situation of Rwandan refugees. It examined several alternatives, including creating enabling conditions for voluntary repatriation, pursuing opportunities for local integration or alternative legal status in countries of asylum and developing a schedule for the cessation of refugee status. The number and profile of Rwandan refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been difficult to estimate since 1996, when significant numbers of refugees fled attacks on the camps in which they had found shelter. Nonetheless, a pre-registration process conducted by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has identified 245,298 Rwandan refugees

currently living in the country. The Congolese National Commission for Refugees and UNHCR now plan to launch a biometric registration exercise to verify the number of refugees in order to have a reliable database for tracking individual protection cases. The biometric registration will help in identifying the characteristics of the refugee population and providing better needs-based protection and assistance. It will cost an estimated $2,410,665 and take some six months to complete. An amount of $1,410,665 is needed to launch the exercise, with the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration having pledged $1 million.

23. As indicated in my previous report, UNHCR and the World Bank are finalizing a study on forced displacement to provide Governments and development partners with information on the development needs of the displaced and to formulate recommendations on the design of displacement-sensitive policy and operational activities in border communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In September, the Office of my Special Envoy partnered with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UNHCR, ICGLR, the European Union-United Nations Partnership on Land, Natural Resources and Conflict Prevention, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the World Bank to convene a group of experts in preparation for a ministerial conference on land and property rights for returning refugees and internally displaced persons in the Great Lakes region.

## C. Human rights, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence

24. Various actors, including the Allied Democratic Forces and FDLR, and State security and defence forces, continued to commit human rights violations during the reporting period. Armed groups also continued to recruit children for combat. Another issue of concern was the disproportionate reaction of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demonstrations relating to amendments to the electoral law in January 2015. As noted in my most recent report on MONUSCO (S/2015/172), at least 20 people were killed and 64 others injured by the police and the Republican Guard. Some 480 demonstrators, including opposition figures, were arrested and detained, some of them incommunicado. Furthermore, the Government blocked access to the Internet, social media and text-messaging services from 20 January to 8 February to discourage the organization of further demonstrations. Some radio and television stations were also suspended during that period.

25. On 1 December, the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court upheld a term of imprisonment of 14 years for the former Congolese militia leader, Thomas Lubanga, who had been convicted of conscripting child soldiers and using them in combat. On 6 January, a top commander of the Lord's Resistance Army, Dominic Ongwen, surrendered to United States forces in the Central African Republic. He was transferred to the Court on 21 January. The surrender of Ongwen, who was indicted for murdering civilians, enslaving children and stealing property, provides a strong case for cooperation between national, regional and international mechanisms to neutralize armed groups and prosecute perpetrators of atrocities.

### D. Regional economic integration

26. From 3 to 5 November, the eighth ICGLR-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-United Nations Group of Experts Forum on Responsible Mineral Supply Chains was held in Kinshasa to discuss the progress made in ensuring due diligence with regard to the supply chains for minerals in the Great Lakes region. My Special Envoy addressed the participants. While in Kinshasa, he also attended the third meeting of ICGLR ministers in charge of mining, at which the participants assessed progress concerning the Protocol against the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources, in particular with regard to conflict minerals. At both meetings, the participants acknowledged the significant progress made by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda in relation to certification mechanisms for minerals and noted that actions by Burundi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania were encouraging. They called upon States to address continuing challenges in regulating the informal sector operated by artisanal miners, the lengthy and costly process of certification and the low international confidence in minerals originating from the region, which also constrained legal mineral exports.

27. Preparations for the Great Lakes private sector investment conference continued throughout the reporting period. In that context, the Government of Angola, the ICGLR secretariat and the Office of my Special Envoy organized a regional consultation on the investment opportunities brief for the region in Luanda on 17 and 18 December. States members of ICGLR actively participated therein and demonstrated a strong sense of ownership of the process. The participants reviewed the brief, submitted proposals to improve it and provided input to the preparations for the conference. They also supported my Special Envoy's proposal to place regional cooperation and the promotion of public and private investment at the forefront of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. They endorsed the brief and the proposed plan of action for convening the conference.

28. Efforts aimed at harmonizing regional economic integration in the Great Lakes region have reached an advanced stage. The twenty-first meeting of the Sectoral Council of Ministers Responsible for East African Community Affairs and Planning was held in Kigali from 27 to 31 October to consider the status of implementation of previous decisions for enhancing regional integration and to review progress on the Tripartite Free Trade Area Agreement between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community and SADC. The Council of Ministers of the East African Community held its thirtieth meeting from 20 to 28 November, during which it considered the preparations for the sixteenth Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of State, held on 20 February in Nairobi, which had as its theme "Deepening and accelerating integration: towards political federation".

## III. Implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

### A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

29. During the period under review, limited progress was achieved in the implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the

Congo. The appointment of the long-awaited Government of national cohesion on 7 December represents a positive step towards implementing the sixth national commitment relating to national reconciliation. The Government is, however, yet to accelerate the implementation of the reforms identified in the Framework and by the National Oversight Mechanism.

30. In October, the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism transmitted to Parliament the benchmarks derived from the national commitments, with a view to integrating them into the 2015 budget. Active advocacy by the Coordinator contributed to the inclusion of the commitments in the 2015 budget law. The Mechanism also worked with the Ministry of Planning to make the national benchmarks operational and finalize the identification of activities to be included in the Government's priority action plan.

31. To implement the commitment to prevent armed groups from destabilizing neighbouring countries, an amount of $10 million was allocated in the 2015 budget to fund the country's third national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan. During his visit to Kinshasa from 10 to 13 February, my Special Envoy encouraged the Congolese authorities and international partners to mobilize the resources required to facilitate the implementation of the plan. With regard to security sector reform, the Government made limited progress during the reporting period. Importantly, it began to restructure the FARDC command, beginning on 19 September, and instituted an additional command level comprising three defence zones.

32. My most recent report on MONUSCO (S/2015/172) contains further information on the status of implementation of the national commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## B. Commitments of other countries in the region

33. In addition to relative progress in regional economic integration and judicial accountability, as noted in section II, the countries of the region concentrated their efforts on combating illegal armed groups active in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo during the reporting period.

34. The Government of Angola, as Chair of ICGLR, continued its efforts to bring together States members of ICGLR and SADC to discuss the FDLR issue. As indicated herein, the ministers for foreign affairs and of defence of ICGLR and SADC met in Luanda on 19 and 20 October and reiterated the ultimatum given to FDLR to disarm and surrender by 2 January. They also tasked the secretariats of ICGLR and SADC with supporting and monitoring efforts towards the full disarmament of FDLR. My Special Envoy, who attended the meeting, stressed that the leaders of the region should continue to create the conditions for a full, voluntary disarmament of FDLR, while simultaneously pursuing a credible process to exert military pressure on the armed group when the ultimatum expired. He also cautioned the ministers that failure to neutralize FDLR swiftly had the potential to exacerbate tensions within the region.

35. A number of high-level diplomatic activities have been conducted in the region to foster cooperation and build consensual approach to the neutralization of all armed groups in the region, with a focus on FDLR and the Allied Democratic

Forces. On 19 September, the President of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, visited his counterpart in Kinshasa. They agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation on issues of common interest, as indicated in my report on MONUSCO dated 30 December (S/2014/957).

36. On 17 December, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, travelled to Luanda and met the President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, to discuss FDLR and other matters relating to cooperation between the countries. On 21 and 22 December, the President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, led a high-level delegation to Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania to discuss FDLR. He also travelled to Angola on 14 January to engage with his Angolan counterpart on FDLR and other issues of interest to the Tripartite Mechanism on Dialogue and Cooperation, which brings together Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Africa. The President of Angola paid a four-hour visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 19 January and met the President, with whom he discussed FDLR and other bilateral matters. On 28 January, officials from the Rwandan and Ugandan armed forces signed a memorandum of understanding on the sharing of intelligence on the activities of rebel groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

37. Meanwhile, the fifth ordinary session of the Plenary Assembly of the Forum of Parliaments of Member States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was held in Nairobi from 20 to 22 January, organized by the ICGLR secretariat. It was attended by more than 70 parliamentarians from States members of ICGLR and representatives of the Office of my Special Envoy. It afforded an opportunity to review recent political and security developments and discuss future prospects for peace and stability in the region. The participants also discussed the role of the region's parliaments in implementing the declaration on the fight against youth unemployment through infrastructure development and investment promotion, which had been adopted at the special summit of Heads of State and Government of ICGLR held in Nairobi in July. In addition, the role of the region's parliaments in combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources was highlighted. I am pleased that the Forum's action plan for 2015-2016 reflects the readiness of the region's parliamentarians to actively participate in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

## C. International commitments

38. The Office of my Special Envoy has been collaborating with the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank Group and the Government of Belgium to organize a second conference of development partners for the Great Lakes region. The conference, to be held in 2015, will bring together government officials and representatives of regional institutions and development partners to review the progress made since the first conference, held in Addis Ababa in July 2013. The participants will also discuss additional medium-term priorities and the formulation of a development action plan.

39. Since my joint visit to the Great Lakes region with the President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, in May 2013, the Group has made progress in delivering on its commitments to the region. Since September, the Group has dispatched missions to advance designs for a number of projects. Furthermore, the

Group is on track to deliver on all its commitments within the 24-month period that the President announced during our joint visit. At the time of writing, the Board had already approved $538 million for regional programmes relating to energy development, sexual and gender-based violence, women's health, capacity-building for ICGLR and improvement of information and communications technology connectivity in the region.

40. The Office of my Special Envoy has also been collaborating with the World Bank Group to establish a facility intended to help to address the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes region and ensure that Group programmes there are implemented in a conflict-sensitive manner. It is supporting the formulation of regional indicators of peace and stability for Group programmes falling under the fourth pillar of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and helping to identify ways in which cross-border trade can increase the resilience of border communities. Moreover, it has partnered with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Office of my Special Envoy to organize two events on land and property rights for refugees: an expert meeting was held on 1 October and a ministerial conference is planned from 21 to 24 April in Nairobi.

41. On 3 and 4 November, the Office of my Special Envoy and the United Nations Development Programme helped to organize a regional technical meeting in Addis Ababa, with the aim of creating a regional "One United Nations" programme to support the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. The United Nations country teams involved have identified the following areas of intervention that are aligned with the Framework: mobility; gender and sexual and gender-based violence; youth and children; cross-country trade and food security; and sustainable energy. At the time of writing, a follow-up meeting was to be held on 5 and 6 March.

## D. Oversight mechanisms of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework

42. The Regional Oversight Mechanism met twice during the reporting period. Its fourth meeting was held on 22 September, on the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, while its fifth was held on 31 January, on the margins of the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, in Addis Ababa. Importantly, at the fourth meeting, the participants endorsed the findings and recommendations contained in the first progress report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, which was jointly prepared by the Office of my Special Envoy and the Office of the Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes Region. At the fifth meeting, the participants endorsed the investment opportunities brief for the region, which was prepared by the Office of my Special Envoy with support from the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank, the World Bank Group and the International Finance Corporation. It is designed to provide potential investors with information on priority investment areas and projects identified through a consultative process involving all the signatory countries.

43. The Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism contributed to the preparation of the regional plan of action and the progress report on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. It met

periodically during the reporting period to assess the situation, tackle any technical issues relating to the implementation of the Framework and refer issues to the Mechanism, as necessary. During their ninth meeting, held in Nairobi on 8 and 9 January, the Committee members agreed on a set of recommendations for consideration by the Mechanism at its fifth meeting. It should be noted that Rwanda did not participate in that meeting of the Committee or in the most recent meeting of the Mechanism, most likely owing to its concerns regarding the neutralization of FDLR.

## IV. Activities of my Special Envoy

44. Since assuming office in September, my Special Envoy has focused on the major challenges hindering the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework by engaging in intensive shuttle diplomacy with all his key interlocutors. Over the past six months, one of his main objectives has been to help to forge a consensus on the urgent need to neutralize FDLR.

45. During his extensive and frequent visits to the region, my Special Envoy encouraged relevant leaders to take on the FDLR issue decisively and coherently. In that context, he sought to reach a common position with the leadership of the African Union Commission on the issue. Furthermore, he met several Heads of State and Government and interacted with senior officials from Angola, Burundi, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Throughout those consultations, he advocated a two-pronged approach to neutralize FDLR: on the one hand, coordinated efforts to facilitate the group's voluntary surrender and, on the other, preparations for the application of credible military pressure on the armed group, should it fail to disarm and surrender by the deadline.

46. Together with the African Union Commission, my Special Envoy convened a first meeting of the witnesses to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. It was held in Addis Ababa on 1 December to develop a common strategy to deal with FDLR. The participants, including ministers from Angola, South Africa and Zimbabwe, urged the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO to take the necessary action against FDLR if the group failed to comply with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 2098 (2013) and 2147 (2014) and the decisions of the leaders of ICGLR and SADC.

47. As the deadline of 2 January loomed, my Special Envoy met the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on 20 December and stressed the need to take military action against FDLR if it failed to disarm and surrender by the deadline. He concurred with the need for military action after the deadline and gave assurances that operations would begin at a date to be determined by the military command on the ground. He added that steps should be taken to anticipate the humanitarian consequences of those operations.

48. After the deadline expired, my Special Envoy reached out to the Governments of Uganda and South Africa on 6 and 7 and 14 and 15 January, respectively. He joined officials from the Government of South Africa in issuing a press statement calling for military action against FDLR. On 22 January, he met the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, Bernard Kamillius Membe, in Dar es Salaam and encouraged the full participation

of the country, as the largest contributor of troops to the Force Intervention Brigade, in the military operations against FDLR. While reiterating his Government's concern about the likelihood of collateral damage to civilians, the Minister expressed commitment to neutralizing all armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including FDLR, through its contingent within the Brigade. My Special Envoy reassured him that due consideration had been given to protecting civilians in the preparations for military action against FDLR.

49. On 26 January, my Special Envoy travelled to Harare, where he met the President of Zimbabwe, Robert G. Mugabe, in his capacity as Chair of SADC and informed him that MONUSCO and the Force Intervention Brigade were ready to support FARDC operations against FDLR. The President praised the contributions of Malawi, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania to the Brigade as evidence of SADC commitment to helping to neutralize all armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

50. My Special Envoy has also been encouraging efforts to improve relations between the countries of the region. He has been encouraging the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to convene a summit of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries to boost regional development and cooperation and provide a forum for confidence-building between the leaders of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The summit is tentatively scheduled for the first half of 2015. He has also reached out to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community in that regard.

51. During the period under review, my Special Envoy also engaged with regional and international actors, including from civil society, to identify avenues for cooperation and explore opportunities to tackle the root causes of instability in the region. Those avenues and opportunities include implementing durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons, combating impunity, encouraging judicial cooperation and promoting socioeconomic development and the responsible exploitation of natural resources.

52. As part of his efforts in support of the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, my Special Envoy has identified the issue of natural resources as central to his work. In that regard, he has held consultations on the improvement of natural resource management with representatives of Governments, civil society and non-governmental organizations working on mining issues. In the same vein, he has been mobilizing support from the signatories to the Framework and from partners to create the conditions for holding the Great Lakes private sector investment conference.

53. In line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), my Special Envoy has continued to promote the involvement of civil society organizations and women's groups in efforts to bring peace and stability to the region. In that context, he has engaged with civil society organizations from the region to hear their views on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and rally support for his mandate. His Office is collaborating with civil society focal points in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda to establish a regional coalition of civil society actors.

54. Through the Women's Platform for the Framework, my Special Envoy has been promoting the political leadership and empowerment of women, notably by

helping to fund livelihoods projects in conflict-affected communities at the grass-roots level. A first round of grants totalling $193,874 was disbursed to women's groups from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda in November. In October, to mark the fourteenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Office of my Special Envoy partnered with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, MONUSCO, other United Nations agencies, Governments and women's organizations to organize events in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. During the events, he called for the increased involvement of women's organizations in peace initiatives in the region.

55. My Special Envoy also chaired the first face-to-face meeting of the Advisory Board of the Women's Platform on 29 January, on the margins of the twenty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union. He underscored the need to strengthen partnership with regional initiatives and institutions, notably the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and the ministers of the region responsible for gender matters. He also encouraged the expansion of the Board to include other partners, such as the World Bank Group, and recommended improving the resource base of the Platform to enhance its impact at the grass-roots level.

56. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Envoy encouraged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to swiftly implement its commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, including by making provision for those commitments in its national budget.

## V. Observations and recommendations

57. Two years after it was signed, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework is at a critical juncture. A year ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbours had a unique opportunity to stabilize the region and improve the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people by implementing the commitments made in the Framework. Today, I am concerned that the region stands at a crossroads between peace and cyclical instability. The slow implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, the lack of meaningful progress in disarming FDLR and the persistent mistrust between signatories have combined to place the Framework under strain and hinder its implementation. I urge the signatories to and the guarantors of the Framework to tackle those issues as a matter of priority, with the assistance of the international community.

58. I welcome the regional and international consensus on the need to neutralize all armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Effective military operations against FDLR should begin without delay, in line with the announcement made by the Chief of the General Staff of FARDC on 29 January. I urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to closely collaborate with MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade in planning and conducting the operations with due consideration for the protection of civilians. I call upon the international community to continue to support humanitarian actors on the ground.

59. As part of neutralizing armed groups, efforts to ensure an effective programme of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and/or repatriation of former combatants should be redoubled. The door should remain open to ex-combatants and their dependants who wish to enrol in existing programmes. I urge donors to continue to support the programmes and request the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that awareness-raising, repatriation and reinsertion activities proceed without delay. Ending the proliferation of armed groups also requires a comprehensive strategy that should include severing their economic lifelines, creating economic opportunities for young people and bringing perpetrators of atrocities to justice.

60. It is crucial to institute sustained dialogue and build trust between the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I call upon the leaders of the region to work together to define mutually acceptable solutions to neutralize the armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the same vein, I encourage the countries concerned to revive joint mechanisms and to convene a summit of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries as soon as possible. I stand ready, through my Special Envoy, to help to build confidence and trust between the leaders of the region.

61. I urge all the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to renew their commitment to the Framework. I am deeply worried by the low turnout by the Heads of State and Government of the signatory countries at the most recent meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, as well as by the absence of some signatories at the most recent meeting of the Technical Support Committee. The Framework can be an effective tool only as long as its signatories remain committed to it and collectively oversee its implementation. Its governance structures should be strengthened, given that they do not currently appear to provide the intended forums for substantive discussions on the key challenges facing Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. I therefore recommend that the roles and formats of the Mechanism and the Committee be reviewed and strengthened, so that they effectively steer and monitor the implementation of the Framework. The Office of my Special Envoy is developing proposals to strengthen the governance structures, in close consultation with the African Union and the other witnesses. They will be submitted to the signatories in due course.

62. I welcome the preparations for the Great Lakes private sector investment conference and commend the participating Member States for their commitment. I urge public and private institutions to participate in the Conference, which will hopefully attract significant new investment to the region.

63. The exploitation of natural resources contributes greatly to instability in the region. Recent meetings have highlighted progress in enhancing transparency and strengthening legal exploitation. My Special Envoy has also consistently underlined the need to transform the exploitation of minerals from drivers of conflict into agents of inclusive peace, development and transformation. I call upon all stakeholders to step up their efforts to formalize the informal sector operated by artisanal miners, streamline the lengthy and costly process of mineral certification and rebuild confidence in the region's lawful mineral export mechanisms.

64. I commend current efforts to prosecute international crimes and violations of human rights at the national, regional and international levels during the reporting period. I am, however, concerned that individuals associated with violence in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, some of whom are under United Nations or international sanctions, or under international arrest warrants, remain at large. They include prominent members of FDLR, ex-M23 and FARDC. I remind the Governments of the region of their commitment to facilitate the administration of justice through regional judicial cooperation. I also urge them to work together to bring the perpetrators of serious crimes before the appropriate courts of law, whether through prosecution, extradition, surrender or transfer. Greater accountability and better administration of justice will go a long way in rebuilding confidence in the region's governance and judicial institutions, breaking recurrent cycles of violence and promoting durable peace.

65. I am pleased to note that the Women's Platform plays a significant catalytic role in supporting the political and economic empowerment of women in the region. It has the potential to contribute to addressing the root causes of instability, tackling the economic, social and political exclusion of women, addressing deeply entrenched sexual and gender-based violence and empowering women to become agents of transformation. I applaud the unique role that women's organizations play in promoting peace and reconciling communities. I call upon donors to support those organizations strongly and to help to expand the resource base of the Platform.

66. The risk and far-reaching consequences of violence during upcoming elections in several countries of the region should not be underestimated. We must make every effort to prevent election-related violence over the coming months and years. I urge all the Governments to provide ample space for free and open political participation. In particular, I urge all Governments, opposition parties, civil society organizations and international partners to contribute to credible, timely, transparent and peaceful elections throughout the region.

67. Lastly, I thank my Special Envoy, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO and their teams, as well as the team of international envoys and representatives, for their tireless efforts to promote the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. I call upon the Security Council and the international community to continue to support the people of the Great Lakes region in their efforts to achieve the objectives of the "framework of hope".